

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 IO-13

SAJ-01 AID-05 /075 W

----- 065765

R 010927Z SEP 76

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2807

INFO AMCONGEN HONG KONG

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

CINCPAC HONOLULU

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 24572

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PBOR, LA, TH

SUBJECT: PLANNED REOPENING OF POINTS ON LAO BORDER

REF: BANGKOK 24493

1. AS REPORTED REFTTEL, CABINET AGREED AUGUST 31 TO REOPEN TWO POINTS ON LAO BORDER, ONE AT MUKDAHAN AND THE OTHER AT A PLACE TO BE DETERMINED. THAI WOULD TAKE ACTION AT SAME TIME PDRL RELEASED THAI CITIZENS HELD PRISONER IN LAOS, ACCORDING TO DECISION. PRESS REPORTED SEPTEMBER 1 THAT REOPENING IS EXPECTED TO OCCUR WITHIN TWO WEEKS, WITH SECOND POINT PROBABLY AT REMOTE CHIANG KHAM DISTRICT IN CHIANG RAI PROVINCE.

2. MFA OFFICIAL RESPONSIBLE FOR SOUTHEAST ASIA TOLD US THAT HIS MINISTRY HAD NOT WANTED ANY WORD OF CABINET DECISION TO BE RELEASED UNTIL AFTER THAI AMBASSADOR IN VIENTIANE, SAWET KAMONLAPHUTI, HAD CHANCE TO CALL ON PDRL AND EXPLAIN THAI DECISION THERE IN A WAY THAT MADE IT LOOK LESS LIKE AN ULTIMATUM. MINISTRY SENT INSTRUCTION IN THIS SENSE TO SAWET IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING CABINET MEETING AND HOPES THAT HE MANAGED TO SEE
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LAO OFFICIALS RIGHT AWAY BEFORE PRESS REPORTS BEGAN REACHING

VIENTIANE, WHICH IS, OF COURSE, DOUBTFUL.

3. SOURCE SAID RTG PLANS TO OPEN BORDER POINTS AROUND SEP-
TEMBER 16. SAWET IS TO REQUEST LIST OF THAI WHOM LAO PROMISED
DURING FOREIGN MINISTER PHICHA'S VISIT JULY 31-
AUGUST 3 TO RELEASE, AND RTG "HOPES" LAO WILL FREE THEM ON DAY OF RE-
OPENING. ACCORDING TO THE OFFICIAL, THAILAND IS LOOKING FOR
A SIGN OF SINCERITY ON PART OF LAO, WHICH THIS GESTURE
WOULD REPRESENT.

4. PERHAPS INDICATIVE OF LAO REACTION OF CABINET'S
QUID PRO QUO DECISION WAS REPORTED COMMENT OF LAO CHARGE
KATH DITTHAVONG THAT THAILAND SHOULD NOT IMPOSE A CONDITION
TO THE BORDER REOPENING, THERE BEING NO NEED TO REPEAT SOME-
THING ALREADY PROMISED IN THE AUGUST 3 COMMUNIZUE. COMMENT
WAS ENOUGH TO MAKE OUR SOURCE WONDER HOW SUCCESSFUL THAI
POLICY WAS GOING TO BE.

5. WE SUSPECT RTG HAS NO IDEA HOW MANY THAI ARE
ACTUALLY BEING HELD PRISONER IN LAOS. BANGKOK POST REPORTS
TOTAL INCLUDES AT LEAST 300 MERCENARIES.
BURKE

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NNN

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